

## PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. BARBARA LEE**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, April 5, 2011*

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I missed rollcall vote No. 225 on H.R. 1246. Had I been present, I would have voted "aye" on this vote.

**RECOGNIZING THE 2010-2011 CONGRESSIONAL YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR 500 HOURS OF OUTSTANDING SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY—ALEX ROBINSON**

**HON. SAM JOHNSON**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, April 5, 2011*

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure and privilege to inform the Members of the United States House of Representatives that the students of the 2010-2011 Congressional Youth Advisory Council (CYAC) from the Third District of Texas have completed a total of 500 community service hours, fulfilling and far surpassing the requirements of their assigned CYAC in the Community service project.

This year 46 students from public, private, and home schools in grades 10 through 12 made their voices heard by joining CYAC. As the Third District's young ambassadors to Congress, these bright high school students met with me on a quarterly basis to discuss current events and public policy. These impressive young people recognize an important truth: the heart of public service is found when giving back to the community. CYAC students volunteered their time and talents with over 30 organizations including Adopt-A-Highway, Habitat for Humanity, Meals on Wheels, Teen Court, and the USO, to name a few. As one student shared, "CYAC in the Community has allowed me to realize my calling to serve those in the U.S. Armed Forces." I am beyond thrilled that CYAC has helped students unleash their full potential and chase their dreams.

President George H.W. Bush once said, "A volunteer is a person who can see what others cannot see; who can feel what most do not feel. Often, such gifted persons do not think of themselves as volunteers, but as citizens—citizens in the fullest sense: partners in civilization."

With this statement as a benchmark, I am proud to congratulate the members of the 2010-2011 Congressional Youth Advisory Council for showing themselves to be outstanding young citizens of this nation. It is my privilege to submit summaries of their work to the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD to be preserved for posterity and antiquity. To these young public servants, thank you, and keep up the great work! I salute you!

A copy of each submitted student summary follows:

Since I have been a competitive swimmer for over ten years, I thought that it would be a good idea to volunteer at the Plano Special Olympics Swim Team. Not only did I help these kids with their swimming, I made friendships that mean the world to the kids.

I worked for about three months with them, and most of my swimmers achieved their goal at the championship meet, which was a gold medal. One swimmer was constantly afraid of getting in the water, but I eventually got him to conquer his fear and jump into the pool. Often, especially at schools, the mentally challenged kids are written off and no one pays attention to them, but that is just wrong. These are some of the nicest people that you will ever meet, and they are especially eager to learn. Not only is this a great opportunity to make these kids better swimmers, it is a chance to make these kids feel like they fit in and it makes them feel very good about themselves. I was very apprehensive about volunteering at first, but it was one of the most rewarding decisions that I have ever made. The Special Olympics is often short on volunteers, and I really recommend volunteering.

—*Alex Robinson*

**HONORING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE AIR FORCE SERGEANTS ASSOCIATION**

**HON. GUS M. BILIRAKIS**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, April 5, 2011*

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Air Force Sergeants Association's 50th anniversary, which will be celebrated at its 2011 Professional Airmen's Conference and International Convention in San Antonio, July 23 through 27, 2011.

The Air Force Sergeants Association is a not-for-profit organization serving the professional and personal interests of its 110,000 association members, made up of active duty, veteran, and retired enlisted members of the Air Force, as well as the Air National Guard and Reserve. The AFSA advocates for 955,873 active duty and retired Airmen, whether they are an association member or not. Including family members, who also "serve," the number of enlisted "Airmen" represented by AFSA is huge. The association has an auxiliary to which family members of Air Force enlisted members can belong.

The association began in 1961, and has earned the respect of Congressional, Pentagon, and Veterans Affairs leaders for its relentless role as a voice of the Air Force enlisted. The association was instrumental in the establishment of the Survivor Benefit Plan for surviving spouses of retired veterans. They played a major role in the recent passage of the Post-9/11 GI Bill, a comprehensive overhaul of the previous education benefits that will ensure Air Force members and their families are provided with improved educational opportunities. The association has ensured that many military family issues have been brought to the forefront, including the need to construct additional child development centers for child care needs and the establishment of an oversight office in the Office of the Secretary of Defense for the Exceptional Family Members Program to better manage special needs across all military services.

The association also played a significant role to assure veterans of Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and other Overseas Contingency Operations receive the proper and well-earned benefits, care, and treatment for their selfless and heroic service to a grateful nation.

At the vanguard of the effort to achieve cost-of-living adjustments for all those in uniform and those who have retired, the association was a main force in implementing TRICARE for Life medical benefits for retirees over 65 and the implementation of "concurrent receipt" of retirement and disability pay for disabled veterans, rated over 50% disabled.

Additionally, the Air Force Sergeants Association has been a reliable source of information for the legislative process in support of military members and their families.

This well-known and highly respected veteran's organization has been dedicated to serving the total Air Force enlisted corps and their families for 50 years. For 2011, they have adopted "The Air Force Sergeants Association—A Global Voice for over 50 years" as the theme for their Professional Airmen's Conference and AFSA International Convention. May the association continue its good work for many years to come.

**FAA REAUTHORIZATION AND REFORM ACT OF 2011**

SPEECH OF

**HON. RICK BERG**

OF NORTH DAKOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, April 1, 2011*

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 658) to amend title 49, United States Code, to authorize appropriations for the Federal Aviation Administration for fiscal years 2011 through 2014, to streamline programs, create efficiencies, reduce waste, and improve aviation safety and capacity, to provide stable funding for the national aviation system, and for other purposes:

Mr. BERG. Mr. Chair, for eight years, Washington has failed to provide our nation with a long term and stable plan for our aviation infrastructure.

This bill will ensure the much-needed long-term stability and development of our nation's aviation infrastructure.

However, I'm incredibly concerned about the provision in this bill that would phase out Essential Air Service support.

EAS is critical in large states like my own. Rural regions rely on EAS support for vital air transportation. In North Dakota, airports like those in Jamestown and Devils Lake would not be able to provide critical air service without EAS support.

I've talked with North Dakotans, and I know how much they rely on access to air service. Numerous North Dakotans depend on air travel as an essential part of their jobs, and for many rural residents, driving in bad North Dakota weather to get to a larger airport simply isn't viable.

Eliminating EAS would have a significant, detrimental effect on my state and on North Dakotans' access to air service.

As we prioritize spending, we also must promote economic development and job creation. In areas like North Dakota, maintaining essential air service is critical for commerce—we want businesses to invest in our cities.

A Goodrich plant in Jamestown employs nearly 500 North Dakotans. They rely on local air service to do business—air service that would not be possible if essential air service support was phased out.